

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, PINT, AG

SUBJECT: ALGERIAN AGRARIAN REFORM: MORE AUTONOMY FOR SELF-MANAGED FARMS?

REF: ALGIERS A-25

1. OFFICIAL PRESS ANNOUNCED OCT. 1 THAT, AS OF THAT DATE, DECISION TAKEN LAST MARCH TO REFORM SELF-MANAGED AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WOULD BE CARRIED OUT. REFORM, ACCORDING TO PRESS, WOULD CENTER ON GRANTING GREATER AUTONOMY TO THESE HOLDINGS IN ORDER TO INCREASE

DECENTRALIZATION, TO LESSEN BUREAUCRATIC CONSTRAINTS AND TO LIGHTEN ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON PRODUCTION AND MARKETING SYSTEMS. IN MORE DIRECT TERMS, PRESS ADDED, REFORM WOULD TRANSFORM FARMERS ON THESE HOLDINGS FROM SALARIED WORKERS TO RESPONSIBLE PRODUCERS. FARMERS WILL BE GIVEN GREATER LIBERTY IN SELECTING CROPS AND MORE AUTONOMY IN FINANCIAL AFFAIRS. "TOTAL DECENTRALIZATION" OF INVESTMENTS WILL, ACCORDING TO PRESS, GENERATE REVOLVING FUNDS WHICH WILL BE USED TO END DIFFICULTIES SUCH AS LATE STARTS IN PLANTING AND SEEDING.

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2. IN SIGNED COMMENTARY, WRITER FOR OFFICIAL FRENCH-

LANGUAGE DAILY EL MOUDJAHID NOTED THAT WORKERS IN SELF-MANAGED SECTOR, WHO WERE "OFTEN TARGETS OF ENEMIES OF REVOLUTION," HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED BY BROKEN PROMISES, AND DISCOURAGEMENT HAD SOMETIMES CAUSED "NUMBER OF ACTIVE AND COMPETENT PERSONNEL TO BE REDUCED." THIS HAD LED TO DECLINE IN PRODUCTION AND IN WORKER INCOME.

3. COMMENT: THOUGH ITS DIMENSIONS STILL NOT CLEAR, FOREGOING APPEARS TO REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT ADJUSTMENT IN AGRARIAN REFORM POLICY AND MOVE IN DIRECTION OF INCREASING INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE IN "SOCIALIST" FARMING. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, AGRARIAN REFORM HAS BEEN PLAGUED NOT ONLY BY FOULUPS IN MARKETING SYSTEM BUT BY MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF DESERTION OF FARMS BY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS. ACCORDING TO ONE KNOWLEDGEABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE, LATTER PROBLEM HAS REACHED SUCH A PASS THAT REGIME IS DENYING EMPLOYMENT IN STATE-RUN ENTERPRISES TO WORKERS WHO HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO STAY DOWN ON THE FARM.PARKER

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